



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

March's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) decreased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 3.6 percent in March as seen in Northeast Table 1. Year-over-year, the LMA's unemployment rate decreased five-tenths of a percentage point. The *Civilian Labor Force* grew by more than 40 people from March 2002, while the number of unemployed decreased by approximately 380. Three variables can be cited as contributors to the decreases: a mild winter that has allowed an earlier start into major construction projects, more confident consumers in light of war and past tragedies, and a heavy concentration on economic development.

Of the four counties in the LMA, Butte saw the greatest decrease in unemployment over the month (down 1.3 percentage points) for a March 2003 rate of 4.0 percent. Year-over-year, however, Butte County was the only county in the LMA to show a gain. Butte County has been affected by changes at the Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) and a slowdown in construction in the Sun Valley area. Bingham (4.3 percent), Bonneville (3.3 percent), and Jefferson (3.9 percent) Counties showed relatively stable rates over the month, and all showed decreases in a year-over-year comparison. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, showed no change over the month, but decreased three-tenths of a percentage point from March 2002 to end with a rate of 3.5 percent. (See labor force data for all Idaho counties and LMAs on State Table 1 on page 3.)

Other counties in Northeast Idaho saw very little change in unemployment over the month, with the exception of Clark County, which decreased 1.0 percentage point. Clark County saw the largest decrease year-over year, from 9.9 percent to 7.4 percent. The county is heavily dependent on agricultural activi-

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	March 2003*	Feb 2003	March 2002	% Change From Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	83,760	83,390	83,720	0.4	0.0
Unemployment	3,040	3,090	3,420	-1.6	-11.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	3.7	4.1		
Total Employment	80,710	80,300	80,290	0.5	0.5
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	81,730	81,240	82,630	0.6	-1.1
Unemployment	3,370	3,830	3,650	-12.0	-7.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	4.7	4.4		
Total Employment	78,370	77,400	78,980	1.3	-0.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	61,800	60,992	60,792	1.3	1.7
Goods-Producing Industries	9,374	9,028	8,818	3.8	6.3
Natural Resources & Mining	60	51	65	17.6	-7.7
Construction	4,051	3,749	3,642	8.1	11.2
Manufacturing	5,263	5,228	5,111	0.7	3.0
Food Manufacturing	2,690	2,691	2,874	0.0	-6.4
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	286	291	234	-1.7	22.2
Machinery Manufacturing	471	471	412	0.0	14.3
Other Manufacturing	1,816	1,775	1,591	2.3	14.1
Service-Producing Industries	52,426	51,964	51,974	0.9	0.9
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	14,031	13,854	14,266	1.3	-1.6
Wholesale Trade	4,820	4,750	5,111	1.5	-5.7
Retail Trade	7,363	7,280	7,514	1.1	-2.0
Utilities	105	104	99	1.0	6.1
Transportation	1,743	1,720	1,542	1.3	13.0
Information	802	826	907	-2.9	-11.6
Financial Activities	1,977	1,972	2,058	0.3	-4.0
Professional & Business Services	11,444	11,349	11,273	0.8	1.5
Educational & Health Services	6,285	6,213	5,817	1.2	8.0
Leisure & Hospitality	4,599	4,531	4,577	1.5	0.5
Other Services	2,232	2,245	2,232	-0.6	0.0
Government Education	5,184	5,140	5,189	0.9	-0.1
Government Administration	5,872	5,834	5,654	0.7	3.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ties and preparation for planting crops started early this year due to a mild winter.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs in the LMA increased by over 800 from the previous month for a total of 61,800 jobs. *Construction* contributed to almost half of the job increase due to a mild winter that allowed earlier starts on larger projects in both the residential and commercial sectors. *Retail Trade*, *Wholesale Trade*, and *Professional & Business Services* also showed increases of close to 100 jobs each. This shows that consumers are overcoming hesitations brought about by earlier tragedies and uncertainties of war, and they are gaining some confidence in spending and investment ventures once again.

Year-over-year, the LMA showed a job increase of over 1,000 with greater contributions from *Construction*, *Educational & Health Services*, and

Government Administration. Construction showed the largest increase of over 400 jobs as the area continues to see growth in both residential and commercial areas. Larger projects have helped boost these numbers, such as the construction of a Grupo Modelo malt plant, Taylor Crossing on the River (a professional business park), and Anheuser Busch expansions, all in the Idaho Falls area, along with the completion of the BNFL plant at the INEEL in Butte County. *Health Services* continues to see growth as specialized doctors and new medical techniques continue to filter into the area due to the wide geographical area that use services in Bonneville County. Losses year-over-year were noted in *Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Information* as effects of the national economy continue to slowly trickle into the area. *Food Manufacturing* also noted a loss of almost 200 jobs, but was counteracted by *Metal, Machinery, and Other Manufacturing* gains to show an overall gain in *Manufacturing* of over 150 jobs.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

INEEL

- The INEEL will soon be known as the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) once it integrates with Argonne and new contracts are awarded. The change is expected to take place in September 2004. Bechtel BWXT, currently the main contractor for the site, and Argonne are expected to enter bids for the new contracts which will focus on the site's new mission—nuclear energy and other research—and cleanup, its ongoing mission. Bill Magwood, U.S. Department of Energy Director of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, will oversee the new laboratory. Although nuclear energy research will be the primary focus of the new contract, it will continue to be a multi-program site.

Bonneville County

- Local Idaho Falls businessman LaMoyne Hyde was appointed the state's new Director for the Department of Commerce by Governor Dirk Kempthorne. He replaces Gary Mahn who retired as director last year. Hyde is a drift boat manufacturer and outfitter who is known worldwide through the businesses he owns in the eastern Idaho area. Hyde is also a member of the governor's Travel Council and has served on the Governor's Economic Advisory Board. He is also a board member of the Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce and Eastern Idaho Economic Development Council.
- The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce is losing its President. Mike Kuhns, who has been President and CEO for the past two years, has taken a job in Virginia and left at the end of May. Kuhns has seen many accomplishments during his time in office including the new convention and visitor's

bureau that fronts Broadway Avenue just beyond the downtown falls.

- King B, an Idaho Falls meat-packing company that employs close to 275 employees, entered into an agreement with the world's largest manufacturer of meat snacks. Jack Link's now has exclusive rights to King B's information, property, and trade names. Consumers should not notice a change as the name brand and operation will remain the same. Since King B is sister company to Taylor Country Farms in Oregon, they will also be included in the deal. King B will now be known as Ball Manufacturing, Inc.

Madison

- Brigham Young University – Idaho (BYU-Idaho) recently broke ground on its newest building that will be known as the Thomas E. Ricks Building. In 1888, Thomas Ricks was appointed chairman of the Board of Education of the Bannock Stake Academy, the predecessor of Ricks College. In 1902, a year after his death, the academy was renamed Ricks Academy in his honor and later became known as Ricks College, which is now BYU - Idaho. The new building will be built by Jackobsen Construction of Salt Lake City and will house math, history, geography, political science, psychology, sociology, and social work departments. It will be a two-story, L-shaped building that will wrap around the Landscape Horticulture Gardens. It will have 23 classrooms, 58 offices, four reception areas, and an animal science laboratory. Work will begin in May and expected completion is spring 2005.
- The IntelliStar Group is now headquartered in Rexburg. The group is a consortium of companies that specialize in providing technical support and equipment for operations of homeland security. The consortium consists of Collaborative Genetics, specializing in infectious diseases, plant and animal diseases and biowarfare agents; Qual-Tek Associates, specializing in radiation detection, health physics, and transportation and disposal of radioactive materials; and TeraPascal, specializing in explosives, chemicals, and hazardous materials handling. The consortium plans to serve such customers as educational and government entities along with commercial customers. Collaborative Genetics is the only business located in the county.

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